

by providing real and safe opportunities for one-on-one friendships and new options for employment.

And while these activities may not sound like life-changing events to the average person, for individuals with intellectual disabilities, they make a world of difference. This bill helps accomplish that goal in a number of significant ways. It authorizes the Secretary of Education to award grants or contracts with Best Buddies to conduct and expand its activities—with an eye on increasing the participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities, as well as to promote outreach programs. This bill will go a long way toward dispelling negative, hurtful stereotypes and make clear the extraordinary gifts that people with intellectual disabilities nonetheless possess and utilize. More important, it will help move people with intellectual disabilities from the margins of society to the mainstream of society.

I am also pleased to note that this bill is budget neutral. The \$10 million authorization in this bill is offset by repealing two programs that in the most recent fiscal year were funded at \$10.4 million. I know Mr. HOYER and I look forward to working with our colleagues to enact this bill into law, in the hope that we can help raise the hope and dignity of people with intellectual disabilities, and further empower their full participation in our communities.

RECOGNIZING SHARON ADAMSON

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Sharon Adamson, coordinator for Boone County CARES (Child Abuse Resources and Educational Services), and to express my appreciation for her dedication and commitment to the safety of the children in Boone County, Iowa. For the past 14 years, Sharon has contributed her time and talents for the betterment of many young children, and for this I offer her my congratulations and thanks.

A native of Charles City, Sharon graduated from Moody Bible College in Chicago and received her B.A. in education from Trinity College in Deerfield, IL. After receiving her master's degree in counselor education she became a guidance counselor at an elementary/junior high school in Wisconsin before moving to Boone. While at CARES, Sharon played a key role in the growth of seven programs: Happy Bear, No More Secrets, Time Out for Moms, Parent Education, Children in the Middle, Stork's Nest, and Community CARES. She is very proud of Community CARES because it is a community created through "radical" hospitality which provides a safe place where people in need can go.

Sharon has made a significant impact on the Boone community by dedicating her career to benefiting and working towards growing a safe environment for all children. I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress will join me in commending Sharon Adamson for her leadership and service. I consider it an honor to represent her in the United States

Congress and I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Ms. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the "OPEN Government Act."

Since coming to Congress, I have been working for an improved Freedom of Information Act process, a critical component to ensuring an open and transparent government. In 1996 Congress passed important legislation that reflected the changing technological times, the "Electronic Freedom of Information Act of 1996." This important law helped to make FOIA more efficient by providing public access to information including in an electronic format.

The Oversight and Government Reform Committee, of which I am a member, has held several hearings during the past few years about the FOIA process where we learned that it has not progressed as well as we had hoped. Some agencies and departments are doing a better job of fulfilling freedom of information requests while some continue to lag behind.

Requesters often wait months or years to find out the status of their requests or to obtain the information. As a result, the backlogs at agencies and departments continue to grow. Frequently, the only recourse for the denial of requested information is to file lawsuits. However, many requesters cannot afford the high costs associated with court cases.

The "OPEN Government Act" includes many important provisions that I hope will improve the process and eliminate many of the problems that exist in today's system including an amendment that I offered in committee that would provide for greater disclosure to the FOIA requester about the exemption under which a deletion has been made from requested material.

I have heard from constituents who say that when they receive a response from the agency, they are unable to determine why certain information was redacted. While I recognize that in some cases linking a redaction to an exemption may reveal sensitive information, where possible I believe that agencies should specify which exemption applies to which redaction.

Passage of today's legislation is long overdue, and I commend Chairman WAXMAN and Ranking Member DAVIS and their staffs for bringing this bill to the Floor today.

A TRIBUTE TO ANNA GONZALEZ

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Anna Gonzalez, a resident of

Brooklyn for more than 40 years. Anna is the current director of the Hope Gardens Multi-Service Center; a community center that seeks to educate and empower the people of Bushwick, Brooklyn.

Anna Gonzalez, formerly Anna Rodriguez, attended Clara Barton High School. Ms. Gonzalez worked as a nurse during her 20s until she decided to take time off to raise a family. She first became involved in community activism at Public School 86, the elementary school her children attended. She worked as a parent leader, volunteering to help improve the school and then as a leader of a successful boycott to prevent the school's rezoning by local officials.

Ms. Gonzalez's participation in the boycott was a springboard to her next position as Community Associate with the Knickerbocker-Wycoff Service Center, an organization that assists residents with their problems and concerns. Ms. Gonzalez then worked at St. Barbara's Roman Catholic Church, organizing and running youth activities and religious educational services. In 1981, she accepted a position at the P-60 Senior Center, now the Hope Gardens Multi-Service Center. Within 6 months she was promoted to director.

Ms. Gonzalez's tenure as the Director of Hope Gardens has been marked by huge growth in the number of services that are being offered as well as the number of people being served. Today, Hope Gardens is an important community resource. However, her professional responsibilities did not interfere with her community involvement. Ms. Gonzalez was elected twice, the first time as a write-in candidate, to Community School Board #32, serving as chair for 2 years. She has also served on Community Planning Board #4 for more than 20 years, serving as chair for more than 6 years.

Ms. Gonzalez has been married to Pablo Gonzalez for 46 years; is the mother of four children: George, Aida, Jose, and Ralph; and the grandmother of seven children: Christopher, Justin, Anissa, Jacob, Megan, Kelsey, and Jeremy.

Madam Speaker, I cannot say enough about Anna Gonzalez. She is extremely generous with her time and cares a lot about her community.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this awesome woman.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, on December 19, 2007, I missed votes because of scheduled eye surgery in Dallas.

Were I able to attend today's session in the House of Representatives, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes Nos. 1183, 1184, 1185 and 1186.